
1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of a general plan is to build a livable city which has at its core the goal of enhancing the quality of life of all residents. Frequently in general plans, policy statements are strictly limited to land use issues. In this respect *Watsonville 2005* is unique. Interwoven throughout this document are statements of public policy that directly affect children, youth, individuals, families, and seniors. Watsonville is more than streets and buildings, it is a community of people. It is for this reason that the General Plan begins with a statement of policy reaffirming the City's commitment to a community where people come first.

The General Plan serves all of Watsonville's residents, including people of all: economic levels, employment status, ethnic backgrounds, family makeup and educational levels. The primary emphasis is on planning for the future of the existing population in the Watsonville area, including children, in order to make it possible for the existing population, and the population that is a natural extension of the existing population, to remain in Watsonville. This is in contrast to planning for a future population different from the people who now live in the area. In this Plan, goals are defined and policies and implementation measures to achieve those goals, are set forth. Goals address the question "What does the City intend to achieve?" while policies and implementation measures address the question of "How and where does the City intend to achieve the goals?"

Watsonville 2005 addresses the needs of the present population for an adequate number, and a balance of jobs and housing. Without sufficient jobs, residents will not be able to afford housing and other necessities, no matter how dire the need. Without sufficient housing and jobs, many residents will continue to be overcrowded. Adequate jobs, with an inadequate number of housing units, leads to rising housing

prices simply because higher prices can be demanded when housing is in short supply.

Each of these situations exemplifies underplanning for jobs, for housing, or the balance between jobs and housing. The consequences of underplanning for the City's population are continued high unemployment, and overcrowded housing units leading to eventual displacement of people who now live in Watsonville. A shortage of land either for jobs or for housing will obstruct the free function of the market and force a significant demographic shift in Watsonville, alienating the present population.

The City of Watsonville recognizes that its General Plan will be studied and followed by residents, businesses, developers, policy makers and other interested parties. As the City's adopted statement of community values, the General Plan is intended to provide for consistent, long-term implementation of policy from 1992 through 2005.

BACKGROUND

A City serving the needs of people in the community is the basis of *Watsonville 2005*. The residents of Watsonville in 1990 are:

- 61 percent Hispanic, 77 percent Hispanic for those under 18
- Largely lower income, particularly as compared to Santa Cruz County overall
- Largely bilingual, some are monolingual Spanish
- Blue-collar and agricultural laborers
- Dedicated to family values and improving the quality of life.

The city's present identity includes its roles as:

- the center of the agricultural support base of the Pajaro Valley
- a provider of affordable living, particularly in comparison to that of the County and the region

- a place with historic commitment to protection and management of wetlands, open space, and other environmental resources
- the evolving cultural center for the County's Hispanic population and
- an employment center for the Pajaro Valley.

The challenges facing Watsonville today, and in the future, are not unlike those facing many urban areas today:

- High unemployment
- Stagnation in historic job sectors (agricultural job growth and agriculturally-related industries)
- High housing costs
- Resident frustration
- Concern for environmental deterioration
- Nationwide economic slump
- Youth issues
- Shifting job skill markets
- Declining standard of living.

As is evident from the experience of communities all over California and the United States, there are no simple answers to these problems. The problems will be addressed through a wide range of efforts by all sectors of the community. They will require the participation and cooperation on the part of everyone involved, including the State of California, Santa Cruz County, the Local Agency Formation Commission, the City of Watsonville, all of the residents of Watsonville including Hispanics, non-Hispanic Whites and other minorities, environmentalists and the representatives of the various issue lobbies.

The General Plan proposes a responsible approach to addressing the needs of the existing and future residents of Watsonville. It seeks to balance the needs of the various stakeholders and tackles many of the difficult issues facing Watsonville. However, the Plan is only a first step, laying the groundwork to improve the lives of the people of Watsonville. The actual solutions must ultimately come from, and be carried out by, the people in the community.

ISSUES FACING WATSONVILLE:

Population growth in Watsonville

The population growth rate in Watsonville has averaged 2.8 percent annually during the 1980s. In comparison, the population growth rate for the State of California has averaged 2.3 percent annually during the 1980s. Growth is attributed to higher birth and in-migration rates than deaths and out-migration. Although housing and job growth has been very slow in Watsonville over the past five years, population growth has continued at higher than average rates. Looking to the future, it follows that severe limits on housing and job growth may not slow population growth, but will only serve to exacerbate existing problems of under planning for the population.

At the same time, it is also recognized that Watsonville does not have the option to grow infinitely or indefinitely. The General Plan seeks a compromise between the continuation of the historic 2.8 percent growth rate and the 0.8 percent growth rate that could be accommodated with no expansion of the City limits. The Plan proposes a population growth rate of 1.8 percent for Watsonville through the year 2005.

The City of Santa Cruz anticipates a 1.2 percent growth rate and Scotts Valley, a 2.8 percent growth to year 2005, according to the 1992 AMBAG population projections. The projected growth rate of 1.8 percent for Watsonville to year 2005 is in line with the projected growth of these cities in Santa Cruz County. A 1.8 percent growth rate is reasonable and responsible, clearly supporting good planning efforts to contain growth within cities by preventing sprawl and supporting the efficient delivery of urban services.

Housing growth

This General Plan accommodates the addition of 5,300 housing units over the planning period, which equals an average annual housing growth rate of 2.4 percent, excluding the Interlaken area. To put this in perspective, it should be noted that the adopted *Association of Monterey Bay Area Government (AMBAG) 1991-1996 Housing Needs Plan* indicates an 8.1 percent housing growth rate for the unincorporated

rated portion of the Pajaro Valley, requiring an additional 4,662 housing units by July 1996. This contrasts with a 1.8 percent housing growth rate projected for the remainder of Santa Cruz County, outside of the Pajaro Valley. The Pajaro Valley is geographically smaller than the remainder of unincorporated Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley is agriculturally rich, yet it was targeted for substantial growth. These projections, adopted by AMBAG in June 1990, were subject to review by the affected cities and the County. The implication of a policy targeting the development of an additional 4,662 units in the unincorporated part of the Pajaro Valley by 1996 is one of encouraging urban sprawl and leapfrog development, which is the opposite of the policies of compact, city-centered development - key policies of *Watsonville 2005*.

Agricultural preservation

The preservation of the agricultural base of the Pajaro Valley is important for a variety of economic, social and environmental reasons. However, it must be recognized that the problems facing the agricultural industry reach far beyond Watsonville and Santa Cruz County. They also extend beyond the issue of agricultural land preservation. Job growth in the agricultural sector is projected to remain the same, or decrease, both in Santa Cruz County and nationwide; yet, both documented and undocumented immigrants continue to come to the United States, Santa Cruz County and the Watsonville area in search of agricultural jobs. The result is high unemployment. Agricultural wages are low for a variety of reasons related to the market structure of agricultural products. These market structure issues are not specific to Watsonville and will not be solved by Watsonville.

Watsonville is surrounded by land with constrained development potential. The constraints are related to agricultural use, floodplain, coastal zone, terrain and transportation system capacity. The preservation of agricultural land is important, but it must be balanced with efforts to provide for all of the residents of Watsonville. The General Plan addresses the issue of balance by recognizing the value of agricultural land and proposing minimal conversion of agricultural lands, high densities on those lands, and an urban limit boundary beyond which Watsonville

is not proposed to grow, while allowing for an adequate supply of land for affordable housing and the creation of living wage jobs.



Photo: Courtesy of the Register-Pajaronian

Strawberries, the leading crop in Santa Cruz County, had a gross value of \$71 million in 1991.

The provision of adequate and affordable housing:

People are drawn to Watsonville for a variety of reasons, one of which is housing affordability. If housing is no longer affordable in Watsonville, then many of Watsonville's existing residents will be forced to move to other cities and States. This will impact the growing Hispanic population of Watsonville harder than any other population sector because they represent the majority of lower income residents. There are two sides to the housing affordability equation. One is the cost of a housing unit and the other is the amount of money residents earn. When the wages earned by the people seeking housing do not match the cost of the housing, then a wage/affordability gap exists. The two solutions to this problem are to keep housing construction costs down and to provide living wage jobs that align with the skill level of the labor force. The General Plan proposes that both be done.

In order to keep housing costs down the plan proposes:

- That an adequate supply of land for housing be provided. If the land market is too tight, then land costs increase, forcing housing costs upward. If large sites are not available, housing producers cannot realize economies of scale which lower the cost per unit of housing.
- That housing be developed at comparably high densities, utilizing creative site planning to ensure that quality of life is retained.
- That residential development occur on lands that can absorb development without imposing significant infrastructure, and other costs, on the development. While it is appropriate for new development to pay the costs associated with a given development, costs of significant infrastructure can negatively impact the ultimate affordability of housing.

As previously noted, the other critical factor for housing affordability is wages. The incomes earned by many in Watsonville are so low that they cannot afford suitable housing. This is the reason why many households and families double up and live in overcrowded housing. The 1990 census attests to the sizeable overcrowding problem in the city. The overcrowding problem, which is indicative of the low standard of living, is so large that it cannot be addressed solely by public or private subsidies; but requires long-term strategies for raising the standard of living. Two critical strategies are: raising the educational and job skill level of the labor force, and attracting jobs to the city which utilize the job skill level of Watsonville residents.

The General Plan lays the groundwork to remedy the living wage/standard of living side of the issue by promoting job creation and educational opportunity in the city. Key parts of the framework are:

- Proposing the addition of land to the City for job creation
- Proposing the creation of 7,500 jobs which is an adequate number of jobs for the projected labor force in the City at 1.6 laborers per household (allowing for a 5 percent unemployment rate)

- Setting in motion an economic development process to attract jobs to Watsonville
- Promoting a range of educational opportunities, such as joint planning with the school district for new school sites, attracting institutions of higher learning to Watsonville, expanding the library, promoting adult education programs and job skill training, sharing city facilities with schools and planning for joint development of city/school recreational facilities.

Considering the challenges facing Watsonville, the General Plan provides a reasonable balance for all interests.

PROJECTED POPULATION

Most people in the Watsonville Planning Area live in Watsonville and Freedom. In 1990, Watsonville was home to 31,099 residents. Freedom, Interlaken, and other areas within the City's Sphere of Influence included 8,608 people, for a combined 1990 base year population of 39,707. (Figure 1-1 depicts this information.) The General Plan projects that the combined population of Watsonville, Freedom, and Interlaken will grow from 39,707 in 1990 to 51,573 in 2005, an increase of 11,866. Watsonville's share of the population increase is 9,542 people; Freedom's share of the increase is 2,324 people and Interlaken's share of the increase is 0 people. (It is assumed that population and housing growth in Interlaken are accommodated in the County General Plan; therefore, growth in Interlaken is not addressed in *Watsonville 2005*.) By year 2005, the population of Watsonville would be 40,641, Freedom, 9,896, and Interlaken 1,035. The growth will occur within the existing city boundary of Watsonville, Freedom, Interlaken, and in areas to be annexed. The populations of Watsonville and Freedom are considered together in order to promote orderly development. Residents of Freedom and other sphere areas adjacent to Watsonville rely on Watsonville for employment, shopping, streets, utilities, recreational and educational services and therefore are accounted for in these planning efforts regardless of whether Freedom and Interlaken are annexed by Watsonville by year 2005.

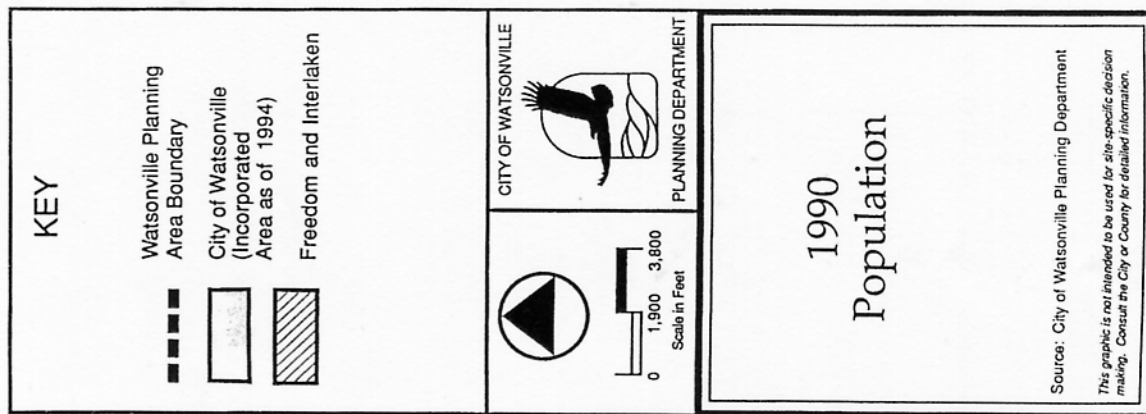
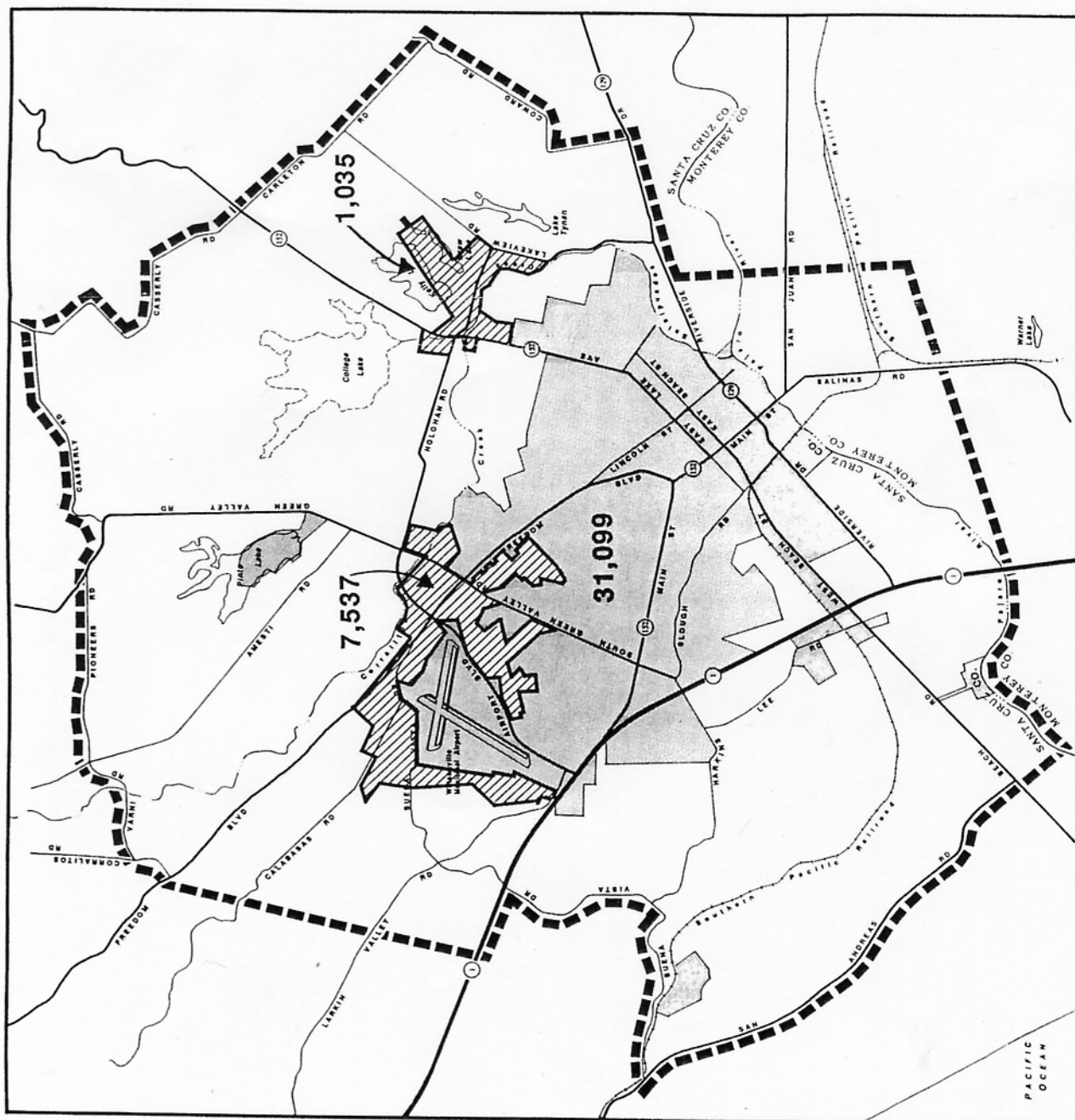


Figure 1-1

THEMES OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The principal theme of *Watsonville 2005* is to achieve a balanced city founded on values present within Watsonville today. *Watsonville 2005* recognizes that the city has a tradition of providing opportunities and services for its people and plans to continue providing new opportunities and services. To do that, a balance must be achieved among the following goals:

- Development of a healthy economy that will provide living wage employment
- Provision of a housing supply to meet the needs of all people in the Watsonville community
- Conservation of the agricultural base of the Pajaro Valley
- Conservation and preservation of natural resources
- Improvement of the quality of life for the City's children and youth
- Increasing the availability of education, and
- Increasing space for parks and open space.

Each of the goals above is described in the following paragraphs.

Development of a healthy economy to provide living wage employment. Employment opportunities enable people to care for themselves and their families. Job opportunity will help the unemployed, underemployed, and people joining the labor force to become economically self sufficient, and is the major element necessary to solve the City's affordable housing problems. The Plan projects the need for an additional 7,500 jobs by year 2005 for residents of the city and nearby surrounding area. The projection is intended to provide jobs for 1.6 persons per household, which was the number of employed people per household in Santa Cruz County and in Watsonville during the 1980s. The projected number of jobs takes into account an allowance for a 5 percent unemployment rate, which is generally acknowledged to be full employment. The General Plan proposes that 3,700 of the jobs be provided within the

1990 City limits and 3,800 be provided on new lands to be annexed to the City. See Figure 4-6 in the Land Use and Community Development chapter for jobs distribution.

Programs for economic development will combine educational programs to improve job skills and target the retention of existing jobs, as well as the creation of new blue and white collar jobs.

Local employment opportunities will minimize the need for residents to commute elsewhere for work, thereby reducing the length of auto trips and air pollution attributable to commuting. Proper distribution of jobs and housing will foster the use of transit instead of automobiles, alleviating traffic congestion and maintaining air quality.

Local jobs held by a local work force will strengthen the local economy which, in turn, generates tax dollars which can be spent on maintaining and improving the quality of life in Watsonville. Watsonville should avoid becoming a bedroom community for people working beyond the Planning Area because a city consisting of housing without a commensurate number of jobs can experience a net drain on its tax base.

Provision of a housing supply to meet the needs of all people in the Watsonville community. Historically, Watsonville has provided a large portion of the affordable housing for Santa Cruz County, and is committed to continuing to provide affordable housing for its residents. Housing that matches the income levels and ability to pay of Watsonville residents is a pressing need. Alleviating overcrowded housing is a key goal of the plan. The General Plan recognizes the enormous challenge of creating an adequate stock of affordable housing for the City and the Freedom area. Twenty-six percent of the existing households are overcrowded (1990). The overcrowding problem is addressed in the General Plan using a threefold approach: first provision of additional affordable housing units so families do not have to double up, secondly, by creation of more units with 3, 4 and 5 bedrooms to accommodate larger families, and thirdly, by provision of more jobs to increase the ability to pay for housing. It is important to recognize that many of the 9,700 people in Watsonville,

who were under age 18 in 1990, will have formed their own households by year 2005.

A total of 5,314 housing units are needed to meet the needs of the projected population of 51,600 in year 2005. See Figure 4-5 in the Land Use and Community Development chapter for housing distribution. These units can be divided into the following need categories:

Watsonville

- 2,945 Units to meet the 9,542 additional residents of Watsonville at 3.24 persons per household.
- 991 Units to address the existing and projected housing undersupply. (These units correct 40 percent of the overcrowding through provision of new units to relieve doubling-up.)
- 220 Units to produce 5 percent vacancy in the Watsonville housing stock. (A 5 percent vacancy rate is a standard used by many Councils of Governments, including AMBAG, to allow for mobility in a city and region.)
- 4,156 Subtotal: Watsonville need**

Freedom and adjacent sphere areas.

(It is assumed that population and housing growth in Interlaken are accommodated in the County General Plan; therefore, growth in Interlaken is not addressed in *Watsonville 2005*)

- 717 Housing units to accommodate 2,324 additional residents generated in Freedom and adjacent sphere areas at 3.24 persons per household.
- 386 Units to address the existing and projected housing undersupply. (Some of these units correct overcrowding in Freedom through provision of new units to relieve doubling-up.)
- 55 Units to provide 5 percent vacancy in new units in Freedom and adjacent sphere areas.

(A 5 percent vacancy rate is a standard used by many Councils of Governments, including AMBAG, to allow for mobility in a city and region.)

1,158 Subtotal: Freedom and Interlaken need

5,314 Total: Watsonville, Freedom, and Interlaken

In the provision of opportunities for housing, there is an emphasis on filling the needs of: lower income households, household requiring large units and other special needs households, since these households are less likely to be accommodated through the normal functioning of the housing market. *Watsonville 2005* plans for 2,100 of these needed units to be built on vacant or underutilized lands within the existing City limits and on vacant or underutilized lands in Freedom. Because existing densities in the City are high, all new units can not be accommodated within the existing City and Freedom without significant impact on the quality of life, particularly for large families. Therefore, three thousand two hundred (3,200) units are proposed on lands in the existing Sphere of Influence, excluding Freedom and Interlaken, and on land to be added to the Sphere of Influence and annexed to the City.

Watsonville 2005 plans for an adequate supply of land to house the city's population, and to achieve balance among housing types, jobs and infrastructure over the life of the Plan. The specific implementing measures recommended in the Plan are:

- requiring Specific Plans for the for newly annexed areas, as shown in Figure 4-11, to address the phasing of development
- careful Capital Improvement Project Programming.

Conservation of the agricultural base of the Pajaro Valley. Watsonville is surrounded by rich farmland and devotes a significant part of its local economy to agricultural support industries. The City values its agricultural surroundings, which are an integral part of its character, its agricultural employment base, and its agrarian heritage. The City has a four-point approach for preserving agriculture:

- conservation of farmland
- continuation of the agricultural support industries
- provision of housing for the agricultural labor force, and
- support for a plentiful supply of water.

The General Plan serves the agricultural community by: the establishing an urban limit boundary, allowing increased development densities beyond those currently allowed by any city in Santa Cruz County, and promoting city-centered development. The urban limit boundary: establishes a physical limit on planned growth, prevents urban sprawl onto adjacent farmland, and requires that the needs of the population be met in areas of compact, quality development. The General Plan proposes that the city reach a state of balance by year 2005 so that no additional boundary expansion will be necessary.

Conservation and preservation of natural resources. The city has a unique wetlands system which is a distinct part of the city's character. The Pajaro River, the source of the fertile Pajaro Valley, flows through downtown Watsonville. Sloughs reach into the city with fingers of open space that are a valuable natural habitat and provide relief from urbanization. The Pacific Ocean, three miles from the city, serves as a vital habitat, an abundant opportunity for recreation and a moderator of the Mediterranean-type climate which creates a delightful living environment, and is conducive to agriculture. Pinto Lake provides recreational opportunities, and Kelly Lake, Drew Lake, and Tynan Lake contribute a natural habitat and diversity to the area. Further away, the Santa Cruz mountains are a scenic backdrop for the city.

The natural environment is conserved by the General Plan which: focuses on preservation of wetlands, establishes a greenbelt around the community and requires development densities in excess of any city in Santa Cruz County as noted above. The effort to preserve the sloughs and associated biological habitat includes:

- initiating a biological study to identify the location of habitat areas

- establishing the measures to protect habitat areas, and other implementing programs to ensure that critical areas are preserved.

In addition, the Plan recommends:

- establishment of an Open Space Acquisition Plan within two years of the adoption of the General Plan.

Measures to establish the greenbelt associated with the urban limit boundary include:

- identifying the general location on the land use diagram
- defining the purpose(s) of each part of the greenbelt
- establishing the framework for securing the greenbelt.

Improvement of the quality of life for the city's children and youth. Approximately one-third (31 percent) of the city was age 17 or younger in 1990. The City is committed to providing educational, recreational, and employment opportunities for its youth and offering them a fulfilling life in Watsonville. Although growth of the labor force nationwide is projected to slow to the year 2005 due to aging of the "baby-boomer" generation, Watsonville is not expected to follow this trend. An examination of population characteristics in Watsonville indicates that continued growth in the city's labor force is likely during the time frame of the General Plan. The city has a younger than average population which means that a large group of young people will need employment opportunities during the next 13 years. The City should plan carefully for the future employment needs of its youth.

The creation of housing and jobs described in the preceding paragraphs addresses some of the needs of children and youth, who are often members of lower income, crowded households. Today's children and youth will be forming their own households within the time frame of the General Plan.

In addition to opportunities for employment and housing, recreational and educational opportunities and services to support youth, young families, households with two working parents, and

single-headed households are established and existing programs are continued in *Watsonville 2005*.

Increasing the availability of education. Education is a bridge to improving the quality of life for the city's youth and adults. It is a prerequisite to taking one's place in the work place, which is projected to require attainment of higher levels of education than in the past. In turn, employment opportunities are the key to raising the standard of living. Therefore, the City is committed to: planning with the School District locations for new schools accessible to school age children, joint planning with school districts to share and develop facilities, and promotion of adult school programs. Other programs in the General Plan related to educational and job skill training opportunities are: attracting institutions of higher learning to Watsonville, promoting job skill training, cooperating with junior colleges to provide locations for classes, using city buildings at night for classes, expanding libraries and library services.

Increasing space for parks and open space. The City has recognized the growing need for land for recreational purposes in Watsonville by publishing a *Parks and Open Space Master Plan* in 1992. The *Master Plan* addresses land for both active and passive recreation and land for environmental and scenic resource protection. The City developed this realistic program of parkland acquisition and development by conducting a survey of the community, studying existing parks and their distribution, anticipating growth, and studying funding mechanisms. Key programs include expansion of existing parks, joint use development of school sites, an expanded pedestrian/bicycle network, and the addition of new community and neighborhood parks. The General Plan calls for the addition of 186 acres for parks by 2005.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

Watsonville 2005 is organized into twelve chapters, a land use diagram, a glossary, and appendices. The subject of housing has been divided into two parts due to its lengthy treatment – the part focusing on goals, policies and actions is chapter 6. The complete

Housing Element is published separately and is an adopted part of the General Plan, *Watsonville 2005*.

The Plan addresses subjects both required by state law and additional subjects which are significant to the city. All parts of the Plan have equal standing and are consistent with each other, forming a cohesive policy document to guide the city into the next century.

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER SUMMARY

CHAPTER 1 – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main thrust of the Plan is highlighted in the executive summary. Central themes, major planning goals, objectives, and policies are briefly presented.

CHAPTER 2 – INTRODUCTION

The introduction to *Watsonville 2005* affirms the City's commitment to a community where people come first. In addition it: describes Watsonville's role in Santa Cruz County, discusses the planning implications of recent population growth, and presents the purpose of the Plan, requirements of state law, the participation of residents in creating and reviewing the Plan, and the planning process. The city's location in the region is described and depicted on a map. A description of how the Plan was updated between 1986 and 1992 provides important insights into the city's recent history. The environmental review and adoption procedures are noted. The vital need to monitor the progress of implementation measures and verify assumptions on which the Plan rests is emphasized to promote successful plan implementation. In recognition that general plans, as living documents, must adapt to changing circumstances, the amendment process is described. The goal stated in this chapter is:

- The City shall encourage the participation of its residents in the planning process and the development of the community.

CHAPTER 3 – GROWTH AND CONSERVATION STRATEGY

This chapter focuses on Watsonville's growth strategy with respect to the surrounding region. Three planning boundaries – the Watsonville Planning Area, the urban limit line, and the Sphere of Influence – and related policies are used to plan future growth. In addition to these boundaries, measures to address the pace and phasing of growth include: a requirement for specific plans, each of which contains its own development phasing schedule for newly annexed areas. Measures calling for the specific plans are listed in chapters 3 and 4.

Projected growth and the supply of land needed to accommodate the city's future needs are analyzed. Maps showing the Planning Area and city are presented.

Growth in the city is planned to continue to occur in a compact, orderly manner so as to make efficient use of the land and avoid urban sprawl. Some of the strategies of this chapter are to:

- Provide for a 2005 population of 51,600 within the urban limit line by designating an adequate amount of land for residential use, employment creation, and parks
- Provide for a moderate and orderly pace of urban development that respects existing community character and provides for a clear separation between urban and agricultural land uses
- Retain the agricultural base of the Pajaro Valley
- Protect farmland beyond the urban limit line
- Provide for compact development within the urban limit line.

The planned number of dwelling units per acre (density) is the highest in Santa Cruz County. Urban development and provision of jobs, housing, parks, and educational facilities are planned for land within expanded city boundaries to avoid "leapfrog" development. In this way, urban services, such as water and sewer, can be delivered to residents at the lowest possible cost and agricultural land is preserved to the maximum extent feasible. The dense pattern of development within city boundaries supports the preservation of agricultural land and open space

beyond the urban limit line. Less dense development of the city would require encroachment into lands beyond this proposed boundary.

Watsonville 2005 establishes an "urban limit line" which is the outer edge where urban development can occur. A greenbelt is established along part of the urban limit line to provide a buffer between adjacent farmlands and natural resources, and urbanization.

In 1990, the population within the combined city and surrounding land eligible for annexation was 39,707. The Plan anticipates a population of approximately 51,600 in the year 2005 within an expanded City limit line. To provide for the needs of this population, the City will annex land in the County. This land is included within its Sphere of Influence. One of the key actions to carry out this General Plan is the expansion of Watsonville's Sphere of Influence.

CHAPTER 4 – LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This chapter establishes land use classifications; sets densities and intensities for development; and creates a pattern of land uses to meet projected needs. The pattern of land use is shown on the Land Use Diagram, which is included herein by reference and adopted as part of this General Plan.

Watsonville's land use pattern has evolved through many decades of development, with the most recent changes including the commercial activity along Main Street between Green Valley Road and Freedom, the residential development of neighborhoods near Green Valley Road, and the light industrial development of Westridge near Highway 1.

The goals of the Land Use chapter can be summarized as follows:

- Provide adequate land for housing, job creation, parks, schools, and resource protection
- Conserve and improve the living environment of existing neighborhoods
- Revitalize the central business district
- Provide adequate neighborhood commercial services

- Strengthen Watsonville's economy by diversifying the industrial base
- Maintain a balance between employment-generating land uses and other urban land uses, such as housing
- Ensure that development is based on the suitability of the land, and that the development review process takes into account the accessibility of public facilities, services and utilities, physical and financial constraints, and human needs and environmental impacts
- Ensure that future development is consistent with the General Plan through use of the city's zoning ordinance, development standards, capital improvement program, and environmental review process.

CHAPTER 5 – URBAN DESIGN AND SCENIC RESOURCES

The purposes of this chapter are twofold: to preserve the city's rich historical and cultural resources, and to preserve the natural beauty and rural environment of the Pajaro Valley. Key goals are to:

- Preserve and enhance visual resources, such as the sloughs and the Santa Cruz Mountains
- Blend new development with recognized values of community appearance and ensure that new development enhances rather than detracts from its surroundings
- Ensure that commercial signs do not detract from street appearance
- Preserve and enhance the appearance of Main Street in downtown
- Preserve scenic rural qualities surrounding urbanized portions of the Planning Area
- Achieve high quality urban design and high quality site, building, and street design
- Enhance and protect structures, sites, and other landmarks that give residents a tie with their cultural heritage
- Support public and private beautification, and promote pride in community appearance
- Protect and enhance views of, and from, identified scenic routes in the Planning Area.

The Planning Commission and the Zoning Administrator are the entities responsible for preserving visual resources. Factors to be considered in project review are identified.

CHAPTER 6 – HOUSING: GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

The purposes of the Housing Element are twofold: to preserve and improve the existing housing stock in Watsonville, and to facilitate the development of new housing to meet the needs of current and future residents of Watsonville.

The complete Housing Element, as approved by the City, is published separately from the rest of the General Plan document because of its length. Chapter 6 of this document includes the final section of the Housing Element document which states the goals, policies, and programs to address housing needs in the community. The complete Housing Element, adopted as a part of this General Plan, is included by reference, and carries the same weight as all other elements. Key goals are to:

- Develop, improve, conserve and preserve housing, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of all residents
- Create a strong economy in Watsonville supportive of private, non-profit, and public sector efforts to meet all of the housing needs of current and future residents
- Provide housing to meet the special needs of large families, single head-of-household families, farm workers, the homeless, and the handicapped and disabled.

CHAPTER 7 – CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The City of Watsonville has recognized the right of its children and youth to live in a community which ensures a secure, healthy, and safe environment and provides opportunities for them to develop to their fullest potential. The policies set forth in this chapter address community concerns specific to children and youth. Key policies are to:

- Foster provision of shelter, food, and support services for families and children in need
- Plan city growth and transportation with children, youth, and families in mind
- Maximize educational, developmental, and learning opportunities for all children and youth, with support from the City, School District, and other public agencies to reduce truancy and drop-out rates
- Promote and expand quality child care
- Encourage workplaces supportive of families by implementing family-oriented employment policies that enable all families to meet their responsibilities at home and at work
- Raise the awareness of Watsonville's children, youth, and families of their rich cultural diversity
- Provide for youth participation in opportunities for leadership development
- Create enrichment opportunities through recreation and cultural arts programs
- Promote safe urban environments
- Assure access to physical and mental health services for all children, youth, and families
- Advocate on the local, state, and national levels for children, youth, and family concerns
- Expand financial support in order to meet the objectives of the Children and Youth chapter.

CHAPTER 8 – RECREATION AND PARKS

The Parks and Recreation chapter reflects the results of an in-depth study by the City in 1992 entitled *Parks and Open Space Master Plan*. The Parks and Open Space strategy is intended to meet the future park and recreation needs of Watsonville's residents based on assessment of the community's needs and analysis of the location and distribution of existing parks. This chapter describes the concerns of the community, the existing park facilities and recreation programs, and policies for continuing to provide high-quality, comprehensive recreation opportunities in the future. Key goals are to:

- Enhance the quality of life by ensuring the provision of services, programs, and facilities that

reflect the recreational needs and desires of the community

- Provide a full range of park and recreation facilities, including active recreation areas, passive natural open spaces, and a network of pedestrian/bicycle trails
- Provide an areawide distribution of neighborhood parks consistent with the *Parks and Open Space Master Plan*
- Provide a comprehensive program of recreational services for children, youth, adults, and senior citizens.

CHAPTER 9 – ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Environmental Resource Management chapter focuses on conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, including water and its hydraulic force, soils, rivers and other waters, wildlife, minerals, archeological resources, and other natural resources.

Conservation and long range preservation of open space are addressed in this chapter as well as in the Parks and Recreation chapter (8) and the Growth and Conservation Strategy chapter (3), which establishes a greenbelt. Key goals are to:

- Preserve agricultural land surrounding the urbanized area
- Protect natural resources through discouraging development on land with multiple natural resources
- Cooperate with the air district to maintain and improve regional air quality
- Protect surface and groundwater resources
- Protect wildlife habitat, soils, and archeological resources
- Protect air, water, soil, and biotic resources from damage by exposure to hazardous materials. The subject of hazardous materials is also addressed in the Public Safety chapter (12)
- Plan development in a way that does not preclude the future utilization of mineral and other resources determined to be of value.

CHAPTER 10 – TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

The Transportation and Circulation chapter establishes the framework to guide the development and maintenance of pedestrian, auto, truck, rail, transit, and air transportation routes and systems, and utility and emergency access routes in the city. Key goals are to:

- Plan for a safe, efficient and environmentally sensitive transportation network
- Promote the increasing use of transit
- Support the use of rail to move industrial and agricultural commodities and to encourage the establishment of passenger rail service to Watsonville
- Plan and provide safe and convenient bicycle facilities
- Recognize the importance of pedestrian travel, and plan for pedestrian opportunities
- Maintain, protect, and improve the facilities and services of the Watsonville Airport
- Plan and provide for a circulation network that preserves and enhances the scenic amenities of the Planning Area
- Plan and provide for the safe, unobtrusive movement of trucks
- Ensure the adequate provision of utilities in a way that minimizes their visual impact and hazard
- Ensure sufficient emergency access routes to support emergency response times included in the Public Safety chapter.

CHAPTER 11 – PUBLIC FACILITIES

The Public Facilities and Services chapter addresses the public facilities needs of the community. The intent is to maintain existing levels of service, to improve existing services to meet current needs, and to maintain the balance between the rate of private development and the provision of public services to the community. Public facilities and services addressed include: fire, police, recreation and parks, library, water, sewer, solid waste, and school services. Key goals are to:

- Maintain or increase the availability of public services and facilities consistent with projected population growth in the city and Sphere of Influence and according to the fiscal resources of the City
- Construct and maintain a water system and institute a water management policy that will provide a sufficient quantity of appropriate quality water to meet the needs of the existing and planned community
- Continue the safe and efficient collection, treatment, and disposal of domestic and industrial wastewater to meet the needs of the service population, and comply with applicable regulation
- Operate an efficient solid waste disposal program that protects the health of area residents, prolongs the useful life of the landfill site, and encourages recycling
- Continue to improve the present library facility and services
- Coordinate facilities planning and land use planning between the City and the Pajaro Valley Unified School District
- Maintain fire and police service levels consistent with city standards for acceptable risk.

CHAPTER 12 – PUBLIC SAFETY

The Public Safety chapter addresses natural and built hazards within the community that have potential to cause loss of life, injury, property damage, economic loss, and social dislocation. These hazards include seismic and other geologic hazards, flooding, urban fire and wildfires, hazardous materials, aviation hazards, and potentially harmful noise levels. The objective of the chapter is not to eliminate all hazards, but to minimize exposure to them to a level of acceptable risk.

Acceptable risk is defined as the level at which the exposure to a hazard is deemed to be tolerable, given the benefits to be gained. The level of acceptable risk for each hazard and the actions needed to maintain that level are defined in this chapter. Key goals are to:

- Provide a pattern of urban development, and associated regulation, which will minimize

- exposure to hazards from the natural or built environment
- Reduce the loss of life, injury, and economic damage resulting from earthquakes and associated geologic hazards
- Reduce loss of life and property damage in areas known to be prone to flooding
- Ensure that fire suppression capability in existing structures is maintained and that new structures conform to current fire safety standards.
- Encourage coordination between urban and rural fire districts for the efficient and effective suppression of structure and wildland fires
- Reduce the potential danger related to the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials to an acceptable level of risk
- Ensure the enforcement of community standards for personal safety
- Anticipate and prepare for disasters and emergency situations and maximize post-emergency recovery
- Ensure the noise compatibility of new and existing uses in the city and require the mitigation of harmful noise effects where appropriate.

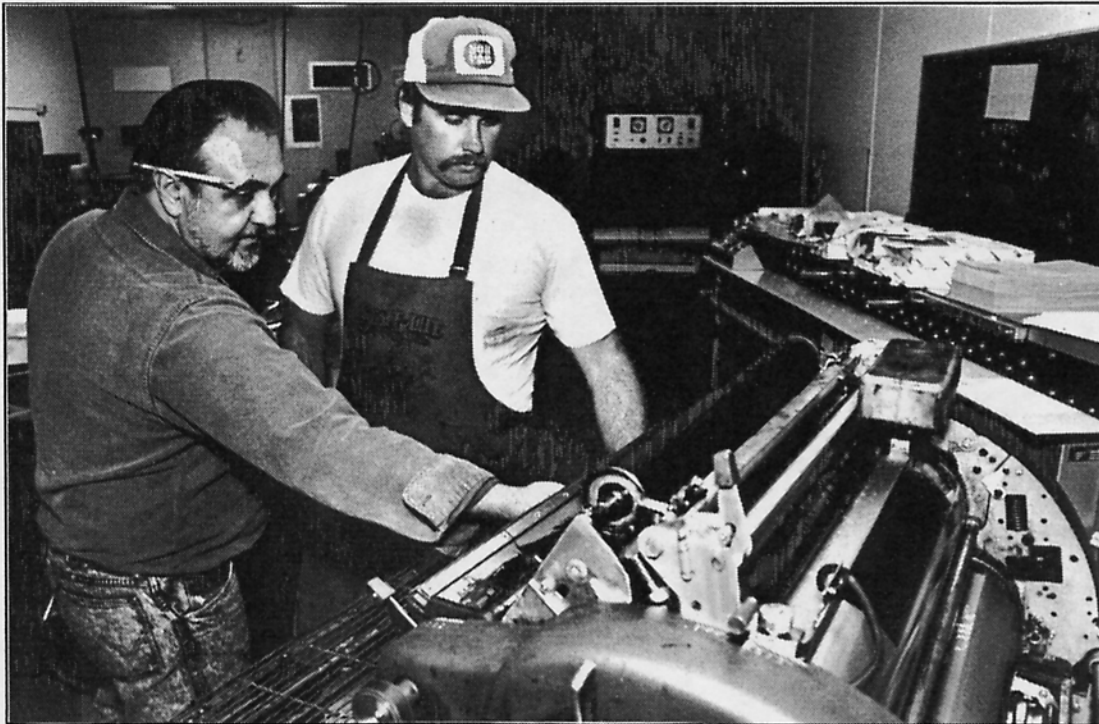


Photo: Courtesy of the Register-Pajaronian

The Watsonville-Aptos Adult School printing program is a hands-on class which has provided training for many people.



Photo: Air Flight Service

Aerial view of Watsonville, March 27, 1989, looking northwest from Monterey County toward Santa Cruz County. The Pajaro River, visible in the lower part of the photo, is the boundary between the two counties. Moving from left to right, prominent landmarks are the Monterey Bay, California Highway 1, City of Watsonville, the Corralitos and Salsipuedes Creeks, which drain into the Pajaro River, and several small lakes near the right side of the photo. The Watsonville Airport is in the northwest part of the city. The unincorporated community of Pajaro is located below the city in Monterey County.